

# Nicaragua *alumni*

## *Alumni Spotlight*

### “My UGRAD experience”

By Grecia Morales, UGRAD alumna

On September 2, 2011, I left my home full of uncertainties, expectations and mixed feelings. With just one carry-on in one hand and my bag in the other, I departed for the United States to live in an unknown world for nine months. I had no idea that day was the start of one of the most interesting, educational and gratifying experience of my life.

My path steered me towards Endicott College, located in Beverly Massachusetts. From the moment I was told that I had been placed in this university, I would surf on the internet everyday through photos of what was to become my home. I was astonished to see that the university was surrounded by beaches and by the forest-very much like my own country.

From the moment I arrived, I felt cared for by the university staff who welcomed me and made me feel right at home. Once on campus, I was placed in one of the oldest buildings of the university with a view to the sea. I shared my room with two roommates each semester. Each of my roommates were from different places in the U.S. I had never had a roommate other than my sister before. But strangely enough, they became just that, my sisters.

The program gave me the opportunity to meet people from different places in the world, starting with the United States, Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Pakistan, Mongolia, Cambodia and the list goes on. It was exciting to go to the cafeteria and sit in the table filled with a mix of cultures, religions, stories, customs and career goals. The most interesting was that “if we did not speak English, we would not have been able to communicate” as my friend from the Philippines used to say.

Academically, thanks to the program I could enroll in classes that were fundamental to my career. The selection of classes each semester was difficult because all the classes were going to be very useful in my profession. To take full advantage of this exchange, I decided to focus on international courses that I could apply in Nicaragua and help showcase my country glob-



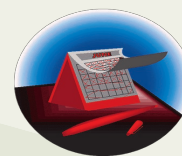
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ally.

The educational system in the U.S. is different from the one I am used to in Nicaragua. The classes required lots of research and “learning by doing” was the teachers’ motto. The classes were more dynamic, and with more interaction, we would discuss real life cases and recommend solutions to problems in the business world.

Also, I had the opportunity to register in other classes such as Culture of the U.S., History of U.S. Women, and one of my favorites, Photography. Thanks to these classes and a variety of visits to museums, parks and nearby cities, I was able to understand a little more about the culture of other countries.

Likewise, another gratifying moment during my stay in Massachusetts was to be able to help the community. I learned there are plenty of options to help people. Not only visiting a center, but also organizing activities that could benefit them.

In conclusion, this has been one of the best experiences in my life; it has definitively changed

the way I see life, and the world. One of the best things that this program offered to me was the opportunity to share with my classmates at UNICA, my teachers, my family and my community all that I learned in these nine months.

At present, I have come to realize that what I have in common with my international friends is faith in spite of one’s difficulties. Each of our countries has the business potential to be competitive in the global market. Besides, by getting to know different cultures I found out that all of them teach us one thing in common: strive for excellence!



## STATE ALUMNI *Register Now!*



### ***AEIF 2012 Winners Have Been Announced!***

We are pleased to announce the **50 Winning Teams** of this year’s AEIF competition. They were selected from 685 competing teams and based on a review by specialists, U.S. Missions, votes from State Alumni members, and a final evaluation by a U.S. Department of State review panel.

### ***CONGRATS TO THE NICARAGUAN ALUMNI TEAM***

The team of alumni, most of them from the Fulbright program, and other programs, has won funding from AEIF to put in motion the project “First Mentorship Program for Young Social Entrepreneurs.” If you would like to know more about this and other projects, log on to [alumni.state.gov](http://alumni.state.gov)

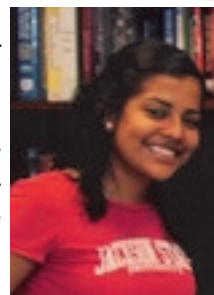
If you have not registered, register ***NOW*** and start enjoying all the benefits of being a member.

*What's going on...*

## Recent Alumni News

### ➡ **UGRAD Alumna representing her university...**

UGRAD alumna Cynthia Cordero recently attended the Jesuit University Humanitarian Action Network (JUHAN) conference at Fairfield University in Connecticut. Around 100 students from different countries attended this conference (U.S., Mexico, India, Qatar, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Australia). Cynthia represented her university, Universidad Centroamericana, and talked about the projects that her university works in along with the NGO TECHO and Architecture students. It has been a great way to put in practice some classroom learning, having the students work in the construction of houses in the poorest areas of the capital Managua.



### ➡ **Congrats to our Youth Ambassadors alumni on their recent success!**

Our Youth Ambassadors Eva Perez, Jordana Rodriguez, and Fatima Hernandez are embarking a new academic experience. They were all selected as part of the SEED program 2012. They will be taking English language training for a year and academic courses at a U.S. college for another year.

For more information on the SEED program, please visit CIED Georgetown University at <http://cied.georgetown.edu/seed/index.cfm>



### ➡ **Welcome Back UGRAD 2011**

The UGRAD 2011 group is back in Nicaragua. They met with U.S. Embassy staff to talk about their experiences, what they liked most and how this learning and cultural experience has changed their lives. Welcome back Grecia, Sara, Jairo, Victor, Walter, Cristina, Sania and Gema.



### ➡ **Photo Exhibit by Fulbright Alumna Margarita Montealegre**

The U.S. Embassy is sponsoring a photo exhibit by Fulbright alumna Margarita Montealegre "Some Festive Days in the U.S.", a compendium of photos taken during her stay in the U.S. as a Fulbrighter and later as a visiting scholar. The exhibit was first presented at the Institute of History of Nicaragua and Central America at Universidad Centroamericana. It will be showing at Centro Cultural Nicaragüense Norteamericano starting this July 10, 2012. The exhibit will later be present in Leon and Bluefields.



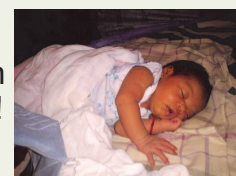
### ➡ **Kudos to Ana Margarita Vijil and Suyen Barahona**

During the recent elections in the political party MRS, held on July 1, Fulbright alumna Ana Margarita Vigil was elected as the new president. Also, Fulbright alumna Suyen Barahona was elected as part of the board member in the same elections. Also, both of them are part of the team that recently won the AEIF competition this year with the project "1st MENTORSHIP PROGRAM FOR YOUNG SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS IN NICARAGUA".



### ➡ **New Baby Girl!**

This little princess, Debbie Elene Aguirre Romero, is the new baby girl of Edwin Aguirre, SUSI Young Leaders alumnus. Our congratulations to the proud father!





# Photo Gallery



UGRAD alumnus Francisco Sevilla sharing with the new UGRADers about his experience in a U.S. college.



A new group of Youth Ambassadors 2012 met with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton during their visit to Washington D.C.



The first group of Youth Ambassadors 2012 back in Nicaragua

## Calendar of Activities for July-August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4 Embassy Closed	5 American Music Concert at Theater Ruben Dario	6	7 SUSI candidates travel to U.S.
8	9	10 Photo Exhibit at CNN by Margarita Montealegre Fulbright Alumna	11	12	13	14
15	16 ECO English Camp, July 16-20 Access English Camp, July 16-20	17	18	19 Embassy Closed	20	21
22	23	24	25 Waste Management Speaker, July 25-27	26	27	28
29	30	31	1 Embassy Closed	2	3	4
5	6 Renewable Energy Speaker, Aug. 6-10	7	8	9	10 Embassy Closed	11 UGRAD candidates travel to the U.S.
12	13	14	15	16	17	18

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Exchange Opportunities



**Happening NOW!**

**English Teachers**

**Webinar 1**

Teaching with Jazz Chants

**Webinar 2**

Unraveling the Mystery of Academic Writing

**Webinar 3**

Listen Up! Using Audio

Books for English Teaching

**Webinar 4**

Fostering Communication through Gaming: Tools & Strategies

**Webinar 5**

Using Evidence in Academic Writing: Avoiding Plagiarism

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